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FARM BUSINESS FACTS

RECORDED
★ FEB 18 1942 ★

Broadcast by E. J. Rowell, Agricultural Marketing Service, in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Friday, October 17, 1941, over stations associated with the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company

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KADDERLY:

The Department's Marketing Service has recently issued reports on the lamb feeding situation, dairy production, poultry and egg production, and farm labor. E. J. Rowell of the Marketing Service is here to give us the highlights of these reports. Let's take them up in the order in which I mentioned them, first, the lamb feeding situation.

ROWELL:

According to information collected earlier this month there will be fewer lambs fed this fall and winter than the record number last year. Most of the decrease is expected in the Corn Belt States. Shipments of feeder lambs and sheep into these states during the past three months were about 10 percent smaller than last year. Right now it looks as though there will be smaller numbers fed in these states: Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and South Dakota. And about as many will be fed as last year in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, and Kansas.

KADDERLY:

What about the western states - they usually feed a good many lambs.

ROWELL:

Things are a little uncertain in that area, Wallace. But the total number of lambs that will be fed in those states may be about as large as last year.

KADDERLY:

Does fewer lambs on feed actually mean fewer lambs will be available for market next spring?

ROWELL:

Not necessarily. The supply of lambs going to market during the winter and spring months will depend to a considerable extent upon what proportion of the large Texas lamb crop is sold as feeder lambs and the number that may be kept and shorn next spring and sold as grassfat yearlings. Also upon the number of ewe lambs that may be held for replacement purposes.

KADDERLY:

In other words, the prospect that fewer lambs will be sent to the feed lots this fall and winter does not mean that the total number of lambs sent to market next spring will be less than a year ago. So much for the lamb feeding situation - now let's have the highlights of the dairy production report.

ROWELL:

Last April Secretary Wickard called for an increase in milk production.

In the first 9 months of this year farmers produced about 5 percent more milk than in the same period last year. This increase has been helped along by near record supplies of grain, record crop yields per acre and ample rainfall over large areas in the West. On October first of this year stocks of dairy products were evidently the largest on record for any month. Per capita production of milk in September was about a tenth greater than the average for that month.

KADDERLY:

The increase in milk production so far this year is very encouraging -- but we still have quite a way to go to meet the increase called for by Secretary Wickard in 1942 -- an increase of about 8 billion pounds over the estimated production in 1941.

ROWELL:

That's right. But the number of milk cows is increasing, grain supplies generally are ample, and there is a good demand for dairy products. So, it seems likely that milk production will continue at a very high rate in the next few months.

KADDERLY:

An encouraging report on milk production, Mike. Now, what about poultry and eggs?

ROWELL:

Again it's a report of record-breaking production. More eggs were produced in September than ever before in that month. Farm flocks were 2 percent larger than last year and the total number of all chickens on farms October first was 12 percent more than a year ago. By January first next year the number of laying hens on farms is expected to equal the all time record set on January 1, 1928. Last month the hatcheries set a new high record for the month. Over 23 million chicks were hatched about 80 percent over September last year.

KADDERLY:

Well now, Mike, if we can have just a few words on farm labor --

ROWELL:

Farmers had to raise wages in the past month in order to keep their help. Farm wages on October first were more than one-third higher than a year ago. The supply of farm labor is now about 25 percent less than last year and less than two-thirds of normal.

KADDERLY:

More workers being drawn into defense industries at higher wages.

ROWELL:

That's just it, Wallace, and ordinarily work on the farms across the country needs more workers in the fall than on July first, but there were actually fewer men working on October first than three months earlier.

KADDERLY:

Shortage of farm labor in some parts of the country has been recognized by Secretary Wickard as one of the handicaps that farmers will have to face in stepping up production next year -- This problem came up at those farm regional meetings -- at Salt Lake City, Chicago, New York, and Memphis -- when the 1942 production goals were considered. More men to do farm work have to be found. And, as Secretary Wickard has pointed out, the first place to look for them is in the great pool of labor registered by the Federal-State Employment services. In some cases the county U. S. Department of Agriculture defense boards can tell any farmer the location of the nearest office of the Employment Services.

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